

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 193417
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 193417

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LIMDIS - FOR CHARGE BEAL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PFOR, AG

SUBJECT: DERIAN MEETING WITH PERMANENT ASSEMBLY FOR HUMAN
RIGHTS

1) HUMAN RIGHTS COORDINATOR DERIAN MET WITH PERMANENT
ASSEMBLY ON AUGUST 9. THE ASSEMBLY DESCRIBED TWO RECENT
ACHIEVEMENTS: (1) THE FORWARDING FOR INVESTIGATION OF THE
HABEAS CORPUS PETITION THEY PREPARED ON BEHALF OF FAMILIES
OF 425 DETAINED PERSONS FROM THE SUPREME COURT TO THE
EXECUTIVE. MORE PETITIONS ARE IN PREPARATION, AND (2) THE
DOCUMENT PUBLISHED IN MAY BY THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS DESCRIBING
CASES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES.
THEY ALSO SAID THEIR GROUP WAS GROWING AND BECOMING MORE
REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL SECTORS OF ARGENTINE SOCIETY.

2) THE GROUP SAID THEY SAW NO IMPROVEMENT IN THE GENERAL
HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION SINCE MS. DERIAN'S LAST VISIT, RATHER
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 STATE 193417

THINGS ARE INTENSIFYING. THE NUMBER OF DISAPPEARED CONTINUES
TO RISE AND DETENTIONS CONTINUE, E.G. PEREZ ESQUIVEL. THEY
SEE SIGNS THAT THE HIGHEST AUTHORITIES EITHER CAN'T OR DON'T
WISH TO MODIFY THE SITUATION. THEY SAID THERE IS GROWING
PUBLIC DISCONTENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT. PEOPLE ARE LOSING
THEIR FEAR AND GOING TO THE COURTS TO ,RESENT CASES AGAINST
THE PUBLIC FORCES FOR MURDER, TORTURE AND DETENTION. THEY

SAID THERE ARE NO MORE MILITARY ENCOUNTERS WITH GUERILLAS BUT THERE ARE INCIDENTS SET-UP TO LOOK LIKE ENCOUNTERS DESIGNED TO KILL PRISONERS. THEY SAID THE ASSEMBLY HAS HAD SOME SUCCESS TO DATE BECAUSE IT HAS WORKED RESPECTFULLY AND DISCRETELY THROUGH LEGAL CHANNELS.

3) MS. DERIAN ASKED ONE MEMBER, DR. MIGNONE, FOR HIS PERSONAL OPINION ON WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WAS ABLE TO CONTROL THE SITUATION. HE RESPONDED THAT, LIKE THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE, THE GOVERNMENT HAS SET A SECURITY APPARATUS INTO MOTION AND IT COULD NOW NOT CONTROL IT. HE CITED THE KIDNAPPING OF AMBASSADOR HIDALGO SOLER AS AN EXAMPLE. THE ATTACK ON FOREIGN MINISTER GUZETTI AND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF FERNANDEZ PONDAL OF ULTIMA CLAVE WERE ALSO CITED AS EXAMPLES OF AN INTERNECINE CLASH BETWEEN LIBERAL AND FAR RIGHT ELEMENTS IN THE ARMED FORCES.

4) MS. DERIAN EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT IF A DISPUTE AT THE TOP WERE TO BE FOUGHT OUT AS TERRORISM WAS FOUGHT, THE PEOPLE WOULD BECOME IRRELEVANT VICTIMS OF THE COMBAT. SHE SAID WHEN SHE WAS LAST IN ARGENTINA THERE WAS A CONSENSUS THAT WHILE THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT WAS NOT IDEAL, THERE WAS NO ALTERNATIVE IN SIGHT. SHE SAID HER IMPRESSION NOW WAS THAT PEOPLE FELT THEY MUST CHOOSE SIDES WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT. SHE ASKED WHAT THEY PREDICTED WOULD COME
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 STATE 193417

OUT OF AN INTER-GOVERNMENTAL DISPUTE.

5) ONE MEMBER SAID THAT THE U.S. MUST DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE, I.E. THAT THE STEPS THE U.S. TOOK WITH REGARD TO ARMS COULD BE CORRECT BUT THE EFFECT ON THE PEOPLE OF SIMILAR ECONOMIC STEPS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED. HOWEVER, EXTERNAL PRESSURE IF WELL THOUGHT OUT AND DIRECTED COULD HELP PUSH THE GOVERNMENT IN A CERTAIN DIRECTION, DESPITE INTER-NECINE PROBLEMS. HE SAID NO ONE CARES ABOUT ARMS BUT ECONOMIC STEPS COULD LEAD TO A GROWTH OF ANTI-AMERICANISM. ANOTHER MEMBER DIFFERED, SAYING THAT THE U.S. IS ENJOYING GREATER POPULARITY TODAY IN ARGENTINA THAN IT HAS FOR MANY YEARS AND U.S. ACTIONS DESIGNED TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING NEGATIVE ACTION IN THE BANKS, IS SEEN IN A POSITIVE LIGHT.

6) THE GROUP CONCURRED THAT THE U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY WAS POPULAR. RESPONDING TO MS. DERIAN'S QUESTION, IT WAS AGREED THAT A DIFFERENCE EXISTED BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THAT THE ASSEMBLY BACKS THE MODERATE GROUP

TO WHICH VIDELA BELONGS. ONE MEMBER SAID THE VIDELA GROUP IS WEAKER AT PRESENT AND ALL PRO-HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF ARGENTINA MUST MOVE FIRMLY AHEAD.

7) THE GROUP MENTIONED THAT THERE WAS SOME PROBLEM WITH AN APPARENT LACK OF CONSISTENCY IN THE U.S. POLICY, KOREA WAS CITED AS AN EXAMPLE. MS. DERIAN EXPLAINED THAT WE ARE TALKING TO PEOPLE EVERYWHERE AS WE WERE HERE.

8) RETURNING TO ARGENTINA IT WAS OBSERVED THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT RESPECTING ITS OWN LAWS. MS. DERIAN ASKED IF THE GROUP THOUGHT THE RIGHT OPTION WOULD BE REINSTATED. ONE MEMBER SAID THIS WOULD SERVE AS A GREAT ESCAPE VALVE, STATING THAT ONLY SOME 10 OF THOSE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 193417

DETAINED ARE TERRORISTS AND THE GOVERNMENT COULD DENY THE RIGHT OF OPTION TO THEM. THE PROBLEM WITH THE RIGHT OF OPTION IS THAT IT FORCES THE GOVERNMENT TO ACCUSE PEOPLE. THE GROUP INSISTED THE DIRTY WAR MUST END, LISTS OF DETAINED MUST BE PUBLISHED.

9) MS. DERIAN INDICATED AGREEMENT BUT SAID SHE FEARED THE GOVERNMENT LACKED THE SELF-CONFIDENCE NEEDED. SHE SAID THE ASSEMBLY MUST USE TACTICS WHICH WOULD AVOID BACKLASH. A GROUP MEMBER EXPRESSED CONCERN WITH THE RECENT DISAPPEARANCE OF JOURNALISTS AND A RECENT JUDGEMENT AGAINST A 17 YEAR OLD OVERTURNED BY THE SUPREME COURT. ANOTHER MEMBER SUGGESTED THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT GIVE THE RIGHT OF OPTION TO THOSE UNDER OFFICIAL DETENTION NOW WHO ARE NOT CONSIDERED EXTREMELY DANGEROUS AND PUT ALL OTHERS DETAINED INTO PUBLIC JAILS. MS. DERIAN SPECULATED THAT THERE ARE PROBABLY PEOPLE WHO HAVE SUFFERED SUCH SEVERE TRAUMAS THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULDN'T AFFORD TO LET THEM OUT.

10) ONE GROUP MEMBER SPECULATED THAT THE RECENT ACTION OF THE COURTS IS A HOPEFUL SIGN AND SHOWS AN INTEREST IN A DEMOCRATIC SOLUTION. HE SAID THE ASSEMBLY IS INTERESTED IN STIMULATING ALL THAT CAN LEAD TO NORMALIZATION AND THE DIALOGUE WHICH VIDELA HAS CALLED FOR.

11) THE GROUP THANKED MS. DERIAN SAYING THEY WERE IMPRESSED BY THE CLARITY WITH WHICH SHE SAW THE SITUATION. THEY ASSURED HER THAT THEY WOULD OVERCOME THE DIFFICULTIES AND THAT A COUNTRY WITH THE VALUES OF ARGENTINA COULDN'T BE STOPPED.

12) MS. DERIAN PRAISED THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY SAYING IT WAS THE HOPE OF THE COUNTRY. SHE SAID THAT ARGENTINA
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 STATE 193417

HAD EVERYTHING GOING IN ITS FAVOR AND IF IT WAS POSSIBLE
TO OVERCOME REPRESSION ANYWHERE, SURELY IT WAS POSSIBLE
IN ARGENTINA.

13) ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE COMMENT AND ADD DESIRED
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